

Watermarks



**A People-Powered
Great Lakes Movement**

Building a People-Powered Great Lakes Movement

I am reminded every day of the essential role Great Lakes residents play in restoring and protecting our waters.

You and others around the region step up in countless ways: Connecting with family, friends, and neighbors about the importance of clean water. Joining the chorus of thousands of advocates that speak out for clean water. Cleaning up local shorelines one piece of litter at a time. Donating to make sure the work gets done. Showing up at a meeting to plan a clean water future for your community.

We couldn't be more grateful. You are part of what keeps us all reaching toward the big goal, even when it seems impossible. Your support keeps us grounded in our commitment to stopping pollution, protecting nature, and making sure everyone can use Great Lakes water for generations to come.

Together, we have accomplished amazing things. But our work is not done.

Fifty years ago, the Cuyahoga River was so polluted that it caught fire. This sparked a national movement that led to the Clean Water Act and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Since then, the river has returned to life and flows through downtown Cleveland. That story has been repeated time and again across the Great Lakes. Our water's comeback is possible because of people like you. And it's people like you who can tackle the clean water challenges we face today.

Public support for clean water is stronger today than it has been in generations. A new generation of people knows how bad things can get, and is demanding better. When we stand together, we are a force — of hundreds, thousands, and even tens of thousands of Great Lakers.

The way we close the distance between where we are now and that vision of clean water we all share is by standing together for the Great Lakes. That's what we do every day, with your support. On behalf of everyone at the Alliance for the Great Lakes, thank you.



Joel Brammeier, President & CEO

Adopt-a-Beach Volunteers Keep Great Lakes Beaches Beautiful

Summer is finally here and Adopt-a-Beach volunteers are stepping up to make sure our Great Lakes beaches are clean and barefoot ready!

This year, our Adopt-a-Beach volunteers took Spring Kick-Off to new heights. We had a record number of cleanup events on all five Great Lakes. More than 130 Team Leaders led cleanups in their communities during Earth Month, with

hundreds of volunteers picking up thousands of pounds of trash. And more volunteers join their ranks every week, making sure our beaches are clean all season long.

We're lucky to count some amazing volunteers among our ranks: tenacious young leaders, businesses, dedicated community groups, and even a TV station. Here are some highlights.



Alliance Outreach Affiliate Sadie Kratt weighs trash collected from Erie Basin Marina.



Adopt-a-Beach volunteers kick off their morning cleanup with a yoga session on the beach.



Teamwork makes the dream work - students work together to gather litter data.



Worth her weight in gold - a young girl scours the beach for trash at a cleanup event.



University of Chicago Lab students clean up 57th Street beach on Earth Day.

GET INVOLVED! Find a cleanup near you at www.GreatLakesAdopt.org



Tens of Thousands of Great Lakers Get Involved to Protect Our Clean Water Legacy

The world's youngest superhero zoomed around Bradford Beach in Wisconsin this spring, cleaning up trash.

Her name? Eco Evie.

She's eight years old. She loves nature and wildlife. And she has autism.

"That's her superpower," said Kelly Mutsch, Evie's mom. This amazing young leader is making an impact for cleaner beaches, land, and water. She and her mom started EcoEvie Apparel, which turns plastic water bottles into wearable fiber.

The health of the Great Lakes, that so many of us enjoy and rely on, is possible because of people around the region who, like Eco Evie, stand up for clean water. This is the story of the environmental recovery our rivers and lakes have experienced over the past fifty years.

The guidelines and regulations that now keep pollution from big factories in check were non-existent when the oil-coated black waters of the Cuyahoga River caught fire in 1969. The burning river famously became a symbol of the dire state of our region's waters, and it ignited a movement.

People all around the Great Lakes spoke out about the pollution and contamination that plagued our water. A

groundswell of action led to the creation of the Clean Water Act, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Cuyahoga River cleanup, and even the creation of the Alliance for the Great Lakes.

Fifty years later, people who care are still at the core of everything we accomplish:

- Nearly 15,000 volunteers clean up shorelines with Adopt-a-Beach each year.
- Advocates send tens of thousands of letters to lawmakers, driving home policy wins to stop invasive species and defend Great Lakes funding.
- Alliance volunteer Ambassadors connect with hundreds of people, spreading the word in their communities about protecting clean water.
- Dedicated residents show up to planning meetings to build a clean water future for their communities in places like Detroit, Michigan City, and Chicago.

Over the next fifty years, it will be people like you that carry our clean water legacy forward. Together we are making progress, and together we can ensure our Great Lakes are healthy and safe for generations to come.

Great Lakes, Great Volunteers

Captain Dave Spangler, Alliance Ambassador from Cleveland, OH



Dave is a charter boat captain with a love of Lake Erie and great passion for protecting clean water. Not only does he have great insights to share and day-to-day experience on Lake Erie, he's full of ideas about how to make an impact. Dave recently traveled to the Ohio Statehouse with the Alliance to educate lawmakers about the importance of lake health.

Eco Evie and the Girl Scouts of Milwaukee, WI

Eight-year-old "Eco Evie" makes caring for the lakes look easy. This spring, Evie and her Girl Scout troop joined an Adopt-a-Beach cleanup at Milwaukee's Bradford Beach, where they removed buckets of trash from the shoreline. And Evie's work doesn't stop there. Together with her mom, Evie runs her own environmentally conscious clothing business, EcoEvie Apparel, which turns recycled plastic water bottles into wearable fibers for 100% recycled clothing.



WKYC Channel 3 in Cleveland, OH



This TV crew used their platform to connect viewers to local water and environmental issues. They called the initiative Planet-CLE, which covered topics from waste reduction to the health of Lake Erie to connecting with the outdoors. To top it off, they teamed up with the Alliance and our partners at Drink Local, Drink Tap to clean up Edgewater Beach. More than 30 Channel 3 employees hit the beach, and they brought friends and family along to join the effort.

Mary Teresa McCarthy and Immaculate Conception School from East Aurora, NY

Neither snow nor rain nor heat will stop this Adopt-a-Beach team. For the third year in a row, Mary Teresa has taken her students to clean up Gallagher Beach in Buffalo, NY. This year, the weather forecast was a bit iffy. But this dedicated crew went out anyway and did a thorough cleaning before the rain moved in. This adventurous teacher and her students brought the classroom outside while making a difference at their local beach.



Herman Miller Cares

Herman Miller is famous for its sleek office furniture and classic mid-century modern designs. The company has also made a name for itself in sustainability. In the Great Lakes region, Herman Miller Cares, the company's foundation, supports environmental education and sustainability initiatives, like Alliance for the Great Lakes' Adopt-a-Beach program.

"The Great Lakes are our headquarters' home," says Diane Bunse, Corporate Safety and Sustainability Specialist at Herman Miller. "We have so many employees who absolutely love the beach and appreciate the opportunity to take care of the shoreline."

And for the past 15 years, Herman Miller Cares has supported the Alliance for the Great Lakes. The company has supported the Adopt-a-Beach program, which engages 15,000 volunteers around the Great Lakes. It's gotten behind our outreach and volunteer programs, like Ambassadors, who connect with hundreds of people to make sure that clean water has a voice in their communities. And, Herman Miller Cares has helped make it possible to offer free Great Lakes lesson plans to teachers around the region.

Herman Miller Cares' support has been transformative. It's allowed for long-term planning and a forward-looking approach to volunteer

engagement. This is a vital component in building our region's clean water future.

In addition to providing funding, Herman Miller staff come out for beach cleanups year after year.

"It's super fun to be out on the beach in the middle of the day, working as a team to do something good," says Jenna Cruz, an engineer.

Herman Miller doesn't just put time and money into cleanups and environmental programs through its foundation. The company takes its commitment to sustainability to the next level by transforming its own practices. It is a founding member of NextWave, a consortium of companies whose goal is to put discarded ocean-bound plastic to use in their products to keep it out of our world's waterways.

"Our corporate work is focused on our process, product, and engaging suppliers around the environment," Diane says. "Herman Miller Cares allows us to reach beyond our own doorstep and work with organizations like the Alliance for the Great Lakes."

"Our corporate work is focused on our process, product, and engaging suppliers around the environment"

At their first cleanup of the year, Herman Miller employees removed nearly 25 pounds of trash and 3,830 pieces of plastic from the beach at Holland State Park in Western Michigan.



IN BRIEF

Do you want to teach about the Great Lakes?

Our Great Lakes in My World Curriculum is now available online. Free lesson plans for all ages come with fun "Creature Cards," assessment rubrics and student journal pages at www.GreatLakes.org/Education

Fifty years ago, photos from the Cuyahoga River fire shocked the world and launched a new environmental movement. With strong pollution regulations and funding for restoration projects, the Cuyahoga River has made a remarkable comeback. Today, our waters face a new threat: thick, green harmful algal blooms. Green has become the new black. Learn more at www.GreatLakes.org/Cuyahoga50

Thanks to the generosity of people like you, who care about the lakes, the **Great Blue Benefit**, our 17th annual fundraiser, raised more than \$165,000. Each dollar helps protect the Great Lakes for the people who drink from them, swim in their waters, and sit by their shores. And it's not too late to donate at www.GreatLakes.org/GBB2019

KEY DATES

Clean Lake Benefit

September 19th

Great Lakes Brewing Company Tasting Room
2701 Carroll Ave., Cleveland, OH
www.GreatLakes.org/CLB2019

September Adopt-a-Beach

September 21st

Regional

www.GreatLakesAdopt.org

SAVE THE DATE

Great Blue Benefit

June 4th, 2020

Theater on the Lake
2401 N. Lake Shore Drive
Chicago, IL

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

We'd love your feedback about our Watermarks newsletter. We're also happy to answer your questions about pressing Great Lakes issues. Email us at alliance@greatlakes.org



ALLIANCE for the
GREAT LAKES

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Sue Conatser, *Chair*

Kate Friedman, *Vice Chair – Policy*

Rachel Schneider, *Vice Chair – Development*

Frank Washelesky, *Treasurer*

David Schmahl, *Secretary*

Adrienne Dziak, *Nominations Chair*

Joel Brammeier, *ex officio*

Lauren Bigelow

Stephen Brewster

Claire Castleman

Thomas Denbow

Aaron Fershee

Quentin James

Thomas Langmyer

Jo-Elle Mogerman

Buzz Patterson

Jeff Pearsall

Laura Rubin

Vanessa Teylosue

Lee Botts, *emeritus*

James Griffith, *emeritus*



ALLIANCE for the
GREAT LAKES

150 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 700, Chicago, IL 60601

312-939-0838 alliance@greatlakes.org

www.greatlakes.org

CHICAGO • BUFFALO • CLEVELAND • DETROIT • MILWAUKEE



facebook.com/AlliancefortheGreatLakes



[@A4GL](https://twitter.com/A4GL)



[Alliance4GreatLakes](https://www.instagram.com/Alliance4GreatLakes)



Great Lakes photos by Lloyd DeGrane

The Alliance for the
Great Lakes works
to protect the Great
Lakes for today
and tomorrow.

